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Creating and Storing a Toolkit for Pilgrimage and Religious Tourism Sites

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This paper reflects our abiding interest in our origins and of those religious and pilgrimage spaces that we attest to actively being part of our cultural inheritance. It explores options for, and barriers to, the creation of a repository of information to support practitioners and the clergy to maintain and develop these religious and pilgrimage sites. A model toolkit for storing collected knowledge is presented with illustrative examples from a range of sources. The examples used are largely drawn from a Northern / Western perspective.

Key Words: site, knowledge, experience, religion, pilgrimage, toolkit

Introduction

Our origins often contrive to express evolving perspectives of our beliefs and values, whether we adopt and embrace these now, or not. In the twenty-first century visitors have many purposes for visits to religious and pilgrimage sites and therefore stakeholders maintaining these sites have responsibilities far beyond those anticipated by guardians from the past. Curiosity motivates many visitors; in the past worship or prayer for some form of intervention were drivers for visits. Today, such visitors are reinforcing their views of the world from which they sprang; they are engaging in imagining forebears' worship and they are incorporating the act of visitation as part of their own personal development, explicitly or tacitly (Rinschede, 1992; Eck, 2002; Swatos and Tomasi, 2002; Digance, 2003; Oviedo and Jeanrenaud, 2007; Rountree, 2010; Jackowski and Smith, 1992). Many 'new world' tourists now throng the pilgrimage and religious sites of Europe from their homes in Australia or Canada. These visits are made explicitly to communicate the values of those forebears within the somewhat culturally austere environments these people now inhabit (Lowenthal, 1975). Therefore, this paper attests to our continuing interest in belief, or in faith, and special spaces that ancestors assembled for shared rituals.

Through the postmodern lens of neo-liberalism and marketisation observers now see an important opportunity to value and elevate these sites to assure future generations of learning and development that cannot and should not be lost. In the words of my own local development officer the role of religious sites reflects an expressed need to increase footfall (both

spiritual and secular), to allow visitors to curate their own experience on site, to encourage and entice a return visit, to make visitors feel a sense of comfort, *gemutlichkeit* or *hygge*, to assist curation or interpretation where necessary and to use spaces within the site to best advantage for all. From a marketised perspective this also reflects our interest in Tonnie's conceptual *gemeinschaft* (1974). The social has a considerable role to play in the business model that emerges.

Literature Review

The twenty-first century is characterised by rapid change, locally and globally, sophisticated communication methods and highly developed personal and public employment of technology. All stakeholders are effectively potential sources of new information to improve what we term the experience economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) and to disseminate where suppliers in experiences have done exceptionally well, and where they have made mistakes in responsible management of religious and pilgrimage sites. So, we are all learners and keen students of management of experiences and more importantly for this paper, we are aspiring current leaders and managers of sites that often have serious shortcomings in what we perceive to be successful co-production of experiences. Through a review and evaluation of these outcomes of successful management a serious attempt to provide a toolkit for the wider audience and players is delivered.

Visitors to sites of origin are often curious about these origins and the source of visitors to such sites can be

from all points of the compass (Hubert, 1994; Raguin *et al.*, 2002; Shackley, 2002; Digance, 2006; Wiltshier and Clarke, 2009).

Stores of creative and adaptive resources are necessary to meet consumers' expectations in tandem with hosts' intentions in delivering managed experiences in religious and pilgrimage sites. In this paper current expectations are explored and categorised according to socio-economic, physical and intellectual stewardship of environmental products such as churches, temples and places of burial, acknowledging hostility and reconciliation across dimensions of feeling, being, knowing and doing (Pearce, 2015). It appears important to assign, store and retrieve values and attributes that signify priorities for protection, conservation, enhancement of display and parallel celebrations of inimitability for example (Silva and Roders, 2012).

Understanding, interpreting, believing and expecting are important issues for consumption of religious and pilgrimage sites (Griffiths, 2011). At the same time a demand-led approach to interpreting, managing, monitoring and strategic thinking around the conservation and development of such sites becomes the domain of a wider range of suppliers who, until recently, perceived themselves as guardians and protectors of religious and worshipful heritage and not site managers or directors (Boniface, 2013; Timothy and Boyd, 2014).

We are also facing a growing realisation that development and protection must be integrated into the wider community as part of the holistic approaches to regeneration, environmental management and socio-economic survival. Elements of heritage conservation must accrue to a wider range of stakeholders with specific responsibility for selected site management, but also assuring an overview of the general landscape protection issues and development opportunities that are holistic and not essentially concerned with specific locations alone (see UNESCO led project on landscapes versus sites in Veldpaus *et al.*, 2013; Harrison, 2013; Matero *et al.*, 2013).

The need for more information and narratives is becoming well researched. Visitors need interpretation, visual stimulation, and aural stimulation. Overall, an improved experience is anticipated and we posit links between the actual experience and the contribution to running costs, maintenance and site improvement (Hughes, Bond and Ballantyne, 2013). Information for visitors and worshippers as well as an array of

narratives for sites are resources that can be incorporated in new knowledge stores.

Apparent attempts at using branding depend on suppliers capitalising on the renown and breadth of identity to deliver a better understanding of the experience to be delivered (King and Halpenny, 2014). Insufficient use of the concepts of sharing brands and identity across space and the value of those brands to a networked community of sites may well prove to be important (Patuelli *et al.*, 2013). Perhaps we have long suspected that the concept of trails and connected heritage sites has been valued by consumers but ignored by suppliers for a variety of reasons; most of which are practice-based and scarcely considered by the sites as individual attractions and significance.

Current approaches to conservation may well be used in marketing and promotion and in developing solutions to manage sites with insufficient income for the maintenance and protection of property (Poulios, 2013; Huang *et al.*, 2012). The approach is to elevate the knowledge of the site in terms of association in networks and vitality, linking the site to the expectations in the experience economy, but more so the expectations in events and interpretation delivered to a much wider audience than worshippers, archaeologists, historians and special-interest groups. It is not the abandonment of spiritual values; it is more about the contemporary relevance of sites as perceived by visitors and as perceived by the clergy and laity responsible for interpretation and relevance to a wider audience than previously monitored. New knowledge stores are generated from this interpretation.

More of a concern for the future of shared knowledge for our toolkit might be evolving approaches from practice that are mirrored by the academy. Rinschede (1992) alludes to various typologies of religious tourists based upon temporal factors and homogeneity of purpose. Current approaches might underpin heterogeneity of purpose, for example motivations from genealogy, emerging worldviews based upon individualism, re-focused personal and professional human development. Rinschede also postulated that a decline in worship and pilgrimage could lead to the demise of special sites as the loss of significance, and therefore any income to maintain and renovate, for visitors at local or regional sites. We can now suggest that the reverse may be true. A rise in information technology to supplement traditional print media may have impacts in reducing costs to suppliers and increasing market penetration. Rinschede also points to the need for a repository as a result of the predicted

decline in numbers and, therefore, records identifying and promoting these less-visited sites could be lost.

A re-orientation of our shared heritage may be necessary. The identified purpose and values assigned by laity and clergy to specific sites may well need re-defining in light of new factors associated with conservation, management of sites and development for a variety of purposes. What we discover is that by conserving the past we open sites to new audiences that hitherto defied engagement or saw little relevance for visiting sites and therefore made no contribution through no involvement and no consultation (Logan, 2012; Waterton and Watson, 2013). The idea is not new audiences but re-defining site purpose and aligning purpose to experience in the vanguard, or innovation often sought through entrepreneurial focus and an enterprise culture and values. These cultures, values and management styles were seldom important before the 1970s emergence of neo-liberal marketisation worship. In effect, ways of re-framing

interpretation and informatics that reflect a wider range of stakeholder engagement in product development and interpretation and therefore management are considered (Kavoura and Bitsani, 2013 reflect on the Acropolis in Athens in such a way).

Relationship building in heritage tourism is an important component of understanding the evolving ways of engaging stakeholders in management and conservation, whilst interpretation is considered and emerging as a theme in site management. The evolving concept moves us from co-existence to exploitation, to imaginative reconstruction (which we could interpret as conservation and further interpretation) (see Newby, 203:208).

It is important to identify and register the contribution of religious site management to new knowledge stores of social capital. In effect the active state of a managed religious and pilgrimage site can create wealth intangibly within the destination that is latterly more universally registered as a resource with tangible values (Murzyn-Kupis and Dzialek, 2013).

Figure 1. Sample job descriptions - Development Officer

Development Officer is responsible for raising funds to support the Cathedral Chapter's priorities, principally endowing the Cathedral choirs, funding major works to the fabric of the Grade I listed Cathedral and enabling the establishment of new work responding to the needs of the local community in this part of . . . We are looking for a graduate with extensive fundraising experience, drive and commitment, who can seek out potential donors, prepare high-quality grant applications to trusts and foundations and enthuse all members of the Cathedral community in playing their part in achieving the Chapter's fundraising objectives. Candidates should have a minimum of two years' experience in a fundraising role, possess exceptional communication skills (both written and oral) and be able to handle and interpret financial information. You should also have experience of using fundraising databases, be a good researcher and be able to work on your own initiative with minimal supervision. . .

. . . responsible for leading on fundraising and audience development. . .

. . . to take the lead in delivering a varied programme of high-quality fundraising events that meets or exceeds budgeted income targets and to expand income generation activity through sponsorship and giving opportunities.

Discussion and conclusions: options for maintaining and developing barriers to maintenance of religious and pilgrimage sites

Co-creation of sites with special focus on suppliers (laity/clergy) and visitors.

In Britain, in the past decade, the designation for some forty cathedrals of a development officer has been key. There is a recognition of the wide responsibility that an Anglican Cathedral has to the diocese and all that reside within. This recognition comes in the addition to management of an officer deemed to connect the wider community to the church. A development officer now attends the regular meetings of clergy that are chaired by the cathedral's dean and some of the lay administrators. The purpose of the development officer is to identify, sort and classify then timetable activities, events, celebrations and festivals that connect the cathedral to its visitors and add value to the experience of the cathedral through existing forms of worship, prayer and liturgy.

The development officer will connect with a wider range of stakeholders to ensure continuity of engagement in actions that bring revenue and visitors to the cathedral (see job descriptions Figure 1). There is a sense in which, once embedded, the role self-sustains a calendar that will only enhance worship and

visits and explore opportunities to connect stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds, usually promising experiences for visitors that have been previously missing.

Co-production of events (laity/clergy)

In the context of sites of worship in the North / West there is also a sense of ecumenicism. Laity and clergy work hand-in-hand co-operatively to develop themes and opportunities that make agreed best use of resources that are not required for specific worship. Not only do these events raise the profile of the site they also embed the values and beliefs of the management team to express mission and encompass wider issues of community and society. It can be said that they may be experimental events, festivals or occasions but they are planned into the calendar and they reiterate the attract, relationship-building, comfort -assuring and creative outcomes for special sacred spaces (see Figures 2 and 3).

Figure 2. Example of co-created visitor experience

Words, Women & War is at Bradford Cathedral on March 8 at 7.15pm, tickets £5. . . . Writer, actor and storyteller... has created a piece which she will be presenting as a work-in-progress at Bradford Cathedral next week to coincide with International Women's Day.

Source: Words, women and war

Figure 3. Co-creation of a festival

A new festival featuring music from the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Baroque periods is set to premiere its first season at the Cathedral of the Incarnation in Garden City this spring. Director of Music at the Cathedral of the Incarnation and the Managing Director of the Festival, believes the Cathedral is the ideal location to host such concerts. The Cathedral was dedicated in 1885, and has been a true center of the community since then. It has nearly perfect acoustics for any kind of music, and even though it seems large, sound carries evenly throughout the space, and is clear and resonant everywhere. What better place to hear early music than in a room filled with fantastic stained glass, wood carving and Gothic architecture? Tickets will be available at the door, and range from \$10–\$20, with students and children admitted free.

Source: LI early music festival

Assignment of spaces for purpose - worship and visit - takes place in parallel. The concept of co-creation is not new and it has been a cornerstone of the immersive experience economy espoused and promulgated for several years (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). To effectively co-create there needs to be assigned spaces (a calendar or schedule) to reflect somewhat divergent needs or identified stakeholders (a relationship-building agreement), a management responsibility (assigned role) and a reflective space and place (directed relationship-building and analytics) on site. This cannot be ad-hoc as the terms-and-conditions of co-creation require management to accompany innovation, inspiration and impact.

Developing options in teaching, learning and ongoing professional and personal development

Having discussed the opportunity to build relationships with new stakeholders, to assure worshippers that their needs are always considered and to communicate ecumenicism and adopt some form of *gemeinschaft* with all actors, it is paramount to embed that communication and interpretation in messages and a repository. Previous work on knowledge gains, knowledge management and transfer is relevant to this focus (Kakabadse *et al.*, 2001; Cooper, 2006). However, this focus requires again a dedicated and managed experience that is controlled from within the religious or pilgrimage site. A calendar and schedule must take into account underpinning beliefs and values. These latter items must have been discussed, acted-upon and promulgated in a timely manner. The differences between co-creation and co-production relate more to the deviation from core action and reflection upon that deviation (see Figures 4 and 5).

Figure 4. Sample from New York

I see worship as an art form, I decided I would try to build a new language around worship . . . to encourage people, not necessarily to do things differently, but to see things differently. To see what they are doing. Seeing things differently is the essence of curated worship, which seeks to shake the worshipper awake from the drowsy routine of an overly familiar liturgy. Where the conventional notion of the worship leader suggests a top-down relationship from pulpit to congregation, curated worship is conceived to open up space for participants to make the church experience their own.

Source: The Art of coffee grounds, caution tape and Marquand worship

Figure 5. Proactive in creating a new school

The Cathedral School is a proposed state-funded Church of England 11-19 secondary school planning to open in September 2017 . . . is currently developing concepts around the curriculum, the school's branding and policies, and over the coming weeks, we will start to consider plans for headteacher recruitment and consultation with the communities that the Cathedral School will serve.

Source: Derbycathedralschool.org.uk

Creative sector enhancements - art and design, visual and tactile

It is fundamental to the immersive and co-created experience that visitors can conceive of sites as fulfilling some aspects of the reflective individual's needs best expressed through the creative sector. Many sites have repositories of demographic data (births, deaths, marriages) that already command the attention of visitors (Wiltshier, 2011 and 2012). Competent sites can work a little harder through interpretation and semiotics to make history come alive (Figure 6).

Figure 7. Community engagement example

We also now have a new member of the congregation, who has also joined the choir, and others have shown great interest in coming to services so that has been a very positive outcome. We now have 'regulars' who stop by on a given day, have a cup of tea and a chat with us, buy a few bits and pieces and go on their way again. It has also meant that people who would not normally come into a church, for whatever reason, feel able to do so because they are coming to look at the shop. Once they are there, most people take a good look round and ask questions. It is a slow process, but it enables people to feel comfortable about coming into the building without fear of being 'preached at' as one visitor said! One of the 'draws' of the shop is its name – 'Heavenly Supplies' – as this intrigues people enough to get them to come in and see what it's all about.

Source: http://www.churchcare.co.uk/images/community_St_Giles_Langford.pdf

Figure 6. Description of Santa Maria de Montserrat, Catalonia

You can add Montserrat to the list of places where people think the Holy Grail is located, but the real treasure is hanging in an art gallery here, which is well worth the €6.50 entry charge. Paintings by Picasso, Renoir, Le Corbusier, Miró, Monet and even Caravaggio populate the museum almost casually.

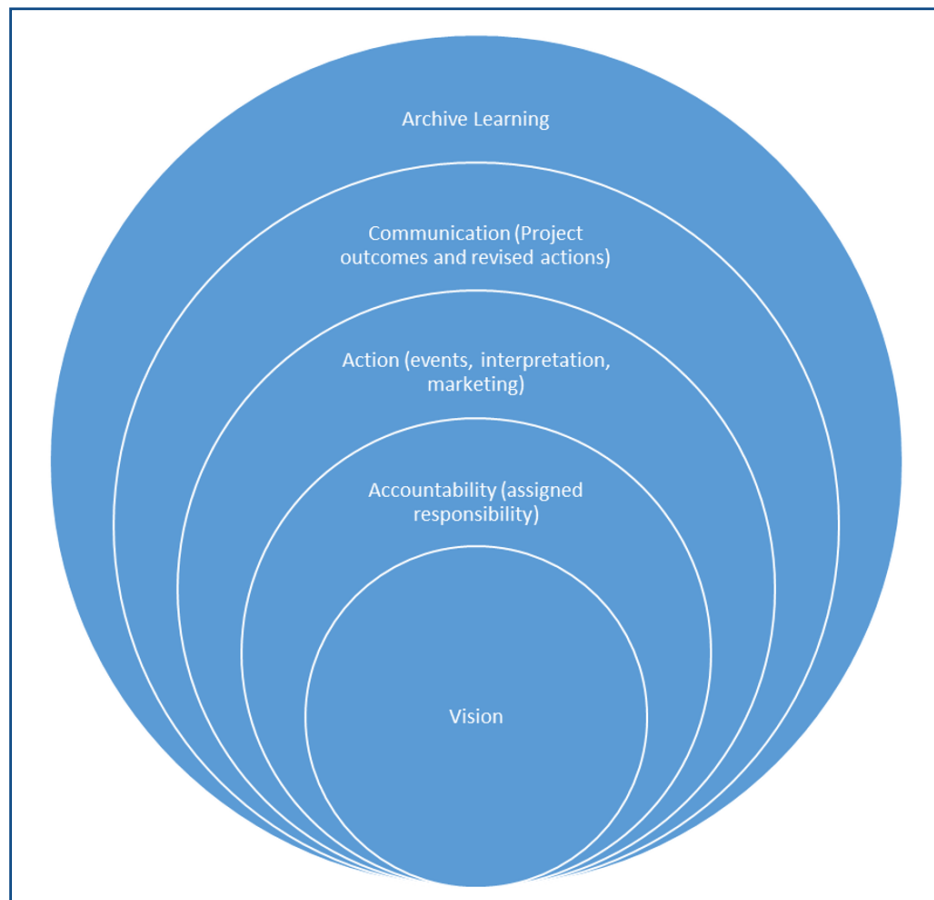
Source: Irish Times 'Spread Your Wings Beyond Barcelona' 25/01/2014

Community support provision – supplementing the public sector

Finally, religious and pilgrimage sites represent the beating heart of many communities and provide a hub for future shared public realm action. These sites can reinforce community values, beliefs and sustain communities for the benefit of the majority (see Figure 7).

Conclusion

In conclusion a model (Figure 8) of impact and focus for change in knowledge sharing and construct for the toolkit emerges (Kania and Kramer, 2013). This model focuses readers on the centrality of the values and vision espoused by site of worship and pilgrimage. It addresses the need for site management to accompany a vision built upon shared beliefs; it refocuses on creativity through communication and resources in skilled staff to embed learning and archive the new knowledge created for the benefit of the wider community and to resonate with the tourists' destination which is the marketised version of the sacred and secular community.

Figure 8: Knowledge Creation, Sharing and Repository Model

(source Kania and Kramar, 2013)

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